

ROLL A ROONIE
21 sep 70

WELCOME TO THE "SOFTWARE" SHOW, AN EXHIBIT PRESENTED JOINTLY BY THE JEWISH MUSEUM AND THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION. THIS EXHIBIT IS SPONSORED BY THE AMERICAN MOTORS CORPORATION, WITH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM DIGITAL EQUIPMENT CORPORATION AND OTHER COMPANIES.

***** YOU ARE NOW READING AT ONE OF THE TERMINALS OF THE "LABYRINTH" SYSTEM, ON WHICH WE ARE ROLLING TEXTS FROM THE SHOW'S PDP-8 COMPUTER UNDER THE HYPERTEXT MONITOR. THIS PARTIAL SYSTEM IS NOT YET INTERACTIVE. WE HOPE TO HAVE ALL COMPUTER PIECES IN FULL OPERATION BY NEXT WEEK. PLEASE BEAR WITH US.

***** HEREWITH DESCRIPTIONS OF SOME OF THE PIECES IN THE SHOW.

***** "SEEK," BY NICHOLAS NEGROPONTE AND THE ARCHITECTURE MACHINE GROUP AT M.I.T., DEMONSTRATES THE INTERACTION OF LIVING CREATURES WITH A COMPUTER PROGRAMMED TO LEARN FROM THEIR ACTIONS. THE LIVING CREATURES ARE GERBILS, PERKY HAMSTER-LIKE CREATURES, PLACED IN AN ENVIRONMENT OF METAL-FACED BLOCKS. THE COMPUTER, AN INTERDATA MOD 3 PROGRAMMED TO INTERACT WITH THEM, MOVES A MECHANICAL CRANE TO REARRANGE THE BLOCKS CONTINUALLY. WHEN THE MACHINE NOTES THAT THE BLOCKS ARE NOT AS IT LEFT THEM-- EVIDENCE OF THE GERBILS' ACTIVITY IN A PARTICULAR AREA-- IT SHIFTS ITS STACKING PLAN TO ACCOMMODATE THIS ACTIVITY. THUS THE COMPUTER "ADAPTS" TO THE DESIRES OF THE LIVING; THUS SYSTEMS OF THE FUTURE MAY SERVE MAN QUIETLY IN ARCHITECTURAL PLANNING ACCORDING TO HIS NEEDS.

***** THE "VISION SUBSTITUTION SYSTEM," OF THE SMITH-KETTLEWELL INSTITUTE OF VISUAL SCIENCES, IS AN EXPERIMENTAL DEVICE CONCERNED WITH THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SIGHT AND THE OTHER SENSES; OR, IN PRACTICAL BUT LONG-RANGE TERMS, IN ENABLING THE BLIND TO "SEE". THE SUBJECT SITS IN A SPECIAL WHEELCHAIR HAVING AN ARRAY OF VIBRATING TIPS IN ITS BACK. THESE ARE MADE TO VIBRATE BY A TELEVISION IMAGE, TAKEN FROM A TELEVISION CAMERA AND CHANGED ELECTRONICALLY TO A PATTERN OF VIBRATIONS IN THE TIPS. SINCE THE IMAGES TRANSMITTED TO THE SUBJECT'S BACK ARE TAKEN FROM A MOVIE CARTRIDGE PROJECTOR, THE SUBJECT MAY SEE THE IMAGES HE IS FEELING IN TRANSLATION, AND COMPARE THE ONE WITH THE OTHER-- AN INSIGHT-GIVING EXPERIENCE.

***** DAVID ANTIN'S "CONVERSATIONALIST" IS A SMALL HOUSE WITH SEVERAL ROOMS. AFTER INSTRUCTION IN THE FIRST ROOM, THE PARTICIPANT IS ASKED TO TELL A STORY IN THE SECOND, WHICH HE MAY LISTEN TO IN THE THIRD. HE MAY HEAR AS WELL THE STORIES OF SEVERAL PEOPLE PRECEDING HIM, ALL OF WHOM WERE ASKED TO TELL STORIES WITH SIMILAR CHARACTERISTICS.

***** "INTERACTIVE PAPER SYSTEMS" IS SONIA SHERIDAN'S PLAYGROUND OF COPY MACHINES, COLOR AND MONOCHROME, WHERE THE USER IS ENCOURAGED TO DEVISE PICTURES AND COLLAGES, AND SEND THEM AWAY BY MAIL.

***** LES LEVINE'S "A.I.R." (ARTIST IN RESIDENCE) IS AN ASSEMBLY OF TELEVISION MONITORS IN WHICH WE VIEW THE ARTIST'S LIFE IN HIS LOFT, AT LEAST AS PRESENTED TO US ON VIDEOTAPE BY THE ARTIST. (NOTE: BECAUSE OF CERTAIN IMAGES HERE PRESENTED, THIS EXHIBIT IS RATED "X." CHILDREN MAY NOT WATCH IT AND ADULTS ARE CAUTIONED.)

***** THE THIRD-FLOOR EXHIBITS ARE PIECES OF "CONCEPTUAL" ART, INCLUDING "SELECTED MENTAL AND PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF DONALD BURGY" (THE PROTOCOLS OF THE ARTIST'S MEDICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTS), NAM JUNE PAIK'S "LETTER," AND SUNDRY OTHER GOODIES APPEALING TO THE ARTISTIC AND OTHER SENSIBILITIES.*****

